

/127 cont./

776 with the ability or knowledge within the domain of the profane.
 [771] appears, then they consider it to be the working of kuei /128/
 * [782] This gives rise to fear or hope, prayers or opposition. There is only one method and that is to invoke the assistance of kuei with supernatural powers and offer sacrifices to them.

Although the Miao do not differentiate between shen and kuei, they do believe that there is a difference between good and bad kuei. The good kuei live in the yin/supernatural/world of heaven [ta] piaŋ. The earth, on which people live, is the yang /mundane/ world. They do not have the theory of hell, but they believe that under the earth there lives a different kind of human beings. These people are as big as the little finger and live in houses plaited of mugwort and grass. A

774 human being has soul [pien] and a body [koŋ-t'ienŋ]. When one dreams it is an excursion of the soul while the body is [828] asleep. When a person is sick and cannot be cured by medicine, [753] then it is said that his soul has been taken away by a kuei.

When a person becomes unconscious, his body has been seized by a ku woman. When a man dies, his soul ascends to heaven, and he comes to the realization of death only when he hears the [715] crash of thunder or when a Miao sorcerer comes to search for [761] him. Those who suffer a sudden or violent death, such as from

[776] knife or spear wound, or from difficult childbirth, rolling into a gully, or falling into a pit, after death many become evil kuei. They are unable to go up to heaven; they are either immediately reborn into another state of existence and come back to life, or remain in the world to make trouble for people.

776 If a streak of black vapor is seen at night, they consider it the manifestation of a kuei and people cry out, "[peŋ ts'əŋ]" 821 (meaning "drive away"), to expel them. The Miao for the [789] most part believe that all natural phenomena have kuei as their

controlling power. Hence the wind has a wind kuei [kueŋŋ] [824] soŋ and trees, tree kuei [kueŋ] nduŋ. When there is a violent storm with wind, thunder, and rain, they must burn [782] beeswax in order to honor the kuei. What has been stated [237] above are the native beliefs of the Miao. In recent years,

823 I can hardly affirm that the Ch'uan Miao believe that the world is flat. The untutored Miao does not know that the world is round, but he sees and climbs and farms so many hills and cliffs and mountains that he regards the world as only comparatively flat. The world has an end somewhere, but he has no conception of its size.

772 Above the sky, or rather on it, is a level land where the souls remain after death with the souls of their ancestors. This paradise is Ntse ni lau Gau bi or the level land of Ntse. There are no hills to climb and there is neither sickness nor death. The sun shines every day. Although there are no rainstorms there is no lack of moisture. Those who live there do not farm but find in the forests such things to eat as berries and fruit, as people are supposed to have done on earth in very ancient times. They are given food, clothing and money by their descendants through the memorial and calendar festivals. It is a good place to live in but not as good as this world. There is a ladder to the sky, but ordinarily mortals cannot go up. Some have swooned away and returned and related to their friends what they saw in the level land of Ntse.

Under this earth there is another world inhabited by dwarfs. These are called in Chinese *sao pa jên* 掃把人或 broom people, because they are as tall as small Chinese brooms or about two feet high. They farm and have their own king, soldiers and government. They live very much as people on this earth, but they have much smaller houses, farms, etc. One Miao fell into dwarfland through a hole in the floor of the emperor's palace, and later came back to the earth through a crack in the ground caused by a drought. When rain finally came, the ground swelled and closed up the crack.

In a special region dragons live or at least the king of dragons lives there. Other stories are told of fishermen who hooked the king of dragons or other dragons with fishhooks in rivers and creeks. To reach the palace of the dragon king it is always necessary to go down through pools of water. When the palace is reached, everything is normal and dry.

There is a special region where demons live where it is always dark. People rarely go there although certain legends describe it.

177 The Chinese idea of three principal souls or *hun* 魂 and
775 seven lesser souls or *p'o* 魄 is accepted by these people. The *hun* are called in Ch'uan Miao *pl'ei* and the *p'o* are called *mp'o*. Of the three principal souls, one remains in the tomb, one goes to Ntse's level country. One stays among the beams under the roof of the house. On the other hand, one is supposed to be reincarnated. The ideas of reincarnation and of the three *hun* and seven *p'o* were learned evidently from the Chinese; my impression is that they have not been well assimilated.

impersonate cows and pretend to fight and to cause the death of six. Women rub 765
soot onto the men's faces until they are black. A woman carries a dummy child
which is beaten to pieces. There is much fun and laughter.

There is also a ceremony performed about once in three years making offerings
to the souls of deceased domestic animals.

In addition, there is the ceremony of eating new grain, and there are at least 11
calendar festivals which in date, method of conducting the ceremonies, and pur-
pose correspond very closely to those of the Chinese.

RELIGION

One can easily get the impression that the Ch'uan Miao have no religion, and 769
they themselves sometimes confirm this impression. They have no religious 776
organizations, no organized priesthood, no temples, and no visible gods. It is my
opinion, however, that they are a very religious people. Through their daily toil,
by the help of their ancestors and the gods, and by means of religious ceremonies,
they hope to achieve a long and satisfying life in which the basic needs of food,
sex, protection, security, and play and recreation are insured, and after death to join
their departed ancestors in the ancient level land of Ntzi. Two of the fundamental
elements in their religion are belief in demons, which cause diseases and other
calamities and which must be exorcised by the magician and his ceremonies,
and the commemoration of their ancestors by ceremonial rites and offerings.

The untutored Ch'uan Miao does not know that the world is round, and he 823
has seen so many mountains that he does not regard it as entirely flat. There is an
end somewhere, but he does not know how big the world is.

Above or on the sky is a level land where the souls of the deceased remain with 772
their ancestors after death. It is called the ancient level land of Ntzi (ntz³ Ti³
lau² gau² bi³). Here there are no hills to climb and neither sickness nor death.
The sun shines every day, and although there are no rains there is no lack of mois-
ture. People do not farm but gather fruit and berries in the forests, which are much
as the forests were on the earth in very ancient times. At the memorial and [796]
calendar festivals the offerings of their descendants provide them with food,
clothing, money, and wine to satisfy their needs. Formerly there was a ladder
connecting the earth and the sky or paradise, but in recent times this connection
has been broken.

Under the earth is another world, the land of dwarfs or Lilliputians who are
about 2 feet tall. They live much like people on the earth, having houses, farms,
a king, soldiers, and a government. One Miao entered this world through a
natural cave in a mountain and remained so long that many of the people on
earth had forgotten him. Another fell through a hole in the floor of the emperor's
palace and after two or three years was able to crawl back onto the earth through
a crack caused by a drought. When rain came again the earth swelled up and
closed the crack.

Some of the stories speak of a dark place inhabited by demons and presided 775
over by a demon king. 776

The Chinese idea of three principal souls and seven lesser souls, and of karma